

In the Claims

1. **(currently amended):** A process for selectively converting dihydroxy-or polyhydroxy alcohols into carbonyl compounds using which process comprises the step of oxidizing said dihydroxy-or polyhydroxy alcohols with dioxygen (O_2) as oxidant in the presence of a catalytic system comprising

- (1) a copper salt, a copper salt containing a heterocyclic ligand or a copper complex salt, and
- (2) a base.

2. **(currently amended):** A process according to claim 1, wherein

the copper salt is selected from the group consisting of CuCl, CuBr, CuI, CuNO₃, CuBF₄,

CuSO₄[.,]and CuPF₆;

the ligand is selected from the group consisting of 1,10-phenanthroline, 5-methyl-1,10-phen-

anthroline, 2,9-dimethyl-1,10-phenanthroline, 4,7-dimethyl-1,10-phenanthroline,

3,4,7,8-tetramethyl-1,10-phenanthroline, 4,7-dihydroxy-1,10-phenanthroline, batho-

phenanthroline, bathocuproinedisulfonate, 2,2'-bipyridine, 2,2'-bipyridyl-3,3'-di-

carboxylate, 2,2'-biquinoline, bis(2-pyridylethyl)amine, tris(2-pyridylethyl)amine,

2-pyridyl-(N-tert. butyl)-methylimine, (2-pyridyl)methanol, ethylene(2,5-dihydroxy-

phenylimine) ~~or~~ and bis(2-hydroxy-3,5-di(tert. butyl)phenyl)sulfide;

the copper complex salt is [M₄(Cu₄OCl₁₀)] or [M(CuCl₃)] or [M₂(CuCl₄)] or mixtures thereof wherein M

is an alkali metal cation, [R₁R₂R₃R₄N]₄(Cu₄OCl₁₀)] or [R₁R₂R₃R₄N](CuCl₃)] or

[R₁R₂R₃R₄N]₂(CuCl₄)] or mixtures thereof wherein R₁-R₄ is independently of one

another C₁-C₆ alkyl, phenyl or benzyl; and

the base is selected from the group consisting of Li(OH); NaHCO₃; Na₂CO₃; Na(OH); K₂CO₃; K(OH);

MgO; CaCO₃; Ca(OH)₂; BaCO₃; Al₂O₃ (basic); a quaternary ammonium salt or a

hydrate thereof [R₁R₂R₃R₄N](OH); [R₁R₂R₃R₄N](Hal), wherein Hal is halogen and R₁-R₄

is as defined above; an alcoholate Na(OR₅), K(OR₅) wherein R₅ is C₁-C₆alkyl-~~or~~ and a

heterogeneous basic support[s] selected from amberlite, ambersep, sepiolite,

hydrotalcit or bentonit.

3. **(currently amended):** A process according to claim 1 ~~or~~ 2, wherein the copper salt is CuCl; the ligand is a phenanthroline ligand; the copper complex is [R₁R₂R₃R₄N](Cu₄OCl₁₀)] and the base is a quaternary ammonium salt or a hydrate thereof.

4. **(currently amended):** A process according to ~~any one of~~ claim 1~~[[~~-3,~~]]~~ wherein the catalytic system is CuCl/1,10-phenanthroline/ $[(CH_3)_4N]OH \cdot 5 H_2O$ or CuCl/ $[(CH_3)_4N]OH \cdot 5 H_2O$.

5. **(currently amended):** A process according to ~~any one of~~ claim 1~~[[~~-4,~~]]~~ wherein the process is carried out in the presence of a solvent at a temperature in the range of 30-140°C.